

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-4. (cancelled)

5. **(currently amended)** A method of making a low-pin-count chip package, said method comprising the steps of:

- providing a sheet carrier;
- laminating a metal layer on the sheet carrier;
- half-etching the metal layer so as to form cavities at predetermined positions thereof;
- forming a photoresist layer on the half-etched metal layer;
- half-removing the photoresist layer such that only the photoresist within the cavities is left;
- forming a metal coating on the surface of the half-etched metal layer which is not covered by the photoresist;
- stripping the remaining photoresist within the cavities;
- etching the half-etched metal layer using the metal coating as a mask so as to form a plurality of connection pads having a substantially concave profile;
- attaching a semiconductor chip onto the sheet carrier;
- electrically coupling the semiconductor chip to the connection pads;
- forming a package body over the semiconductor chip and the connection pads wherein the substantially concave profile helps to lock the connection pads in the package body;
- removing the sheet carrier after the package body is formed, wherein said sheet carrier is completely removed from the package body in the step of removing the sheet carrier; and

forming a protective metal flash on the lower surface of the connection pads exposed from the package body.

6. (original) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the protective metal flash comprises a layer of nickel covering the lower surface of the connection pads, and a layer of metal selected from the group consisted of gold and palladium covering the nickel layer.

7. (original) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the sheet carrier is a polyimide tape with a layer of silicone adhesive.

8. (original) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the sheet carrier is a polyester tape with a layer of silicone adhesive.

9. (original) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the metal coating comprises a layer of nickel covering the surface of the metal layer which is not covered by the photoresist, and a layer of metal selected from the group consisted of gold and palladium covering the nickel layer.

10-13. (cancelled)

14. **(currently amended)** A method of making a low-pin-count chip package, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a sheet carrier;

laminating a metal layer on the sheet carrier;

half-etching the metal layer so as to form cavities at predetermined positions thereof;

forming a photoresist layer on the half-etched metal layer;

half-removing the photoresist layer such that only the photoresist within the cavities is left;

forming a metal coating on the surface of the half-etched metal layer which is not covered by the photoresist;
stripping the remaining photoresist within the cavities;
etching the half-etched metal layer using the metal coating as a mask so as to form a die pad and a plurality of connection pads having a substantially concave profile;
attaching a semiconductor chip onto the die pad;
electrically coupling the semiconductor chip to the connection pads;
forming a package body over the semiconductor chip and the connection pads wherein the substantially concave profile helps to lock the connection pads in the package body;
removing the sheet carrier after the package body is formed, wherein said sheet carrier is completely removed from the package body in the step of removing the sheet carrier; and
forming a protective metal flash on the lower surfaces of the die pad and the connection pads.

15. (original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the protective metal flash comprises a layer of nickel covering the lower surfaces of the die pad and the connection pads, and a layer of metal selected from the group consisted of gold and palladium covering the nickel layer.

16. (original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the sheet carrier is a polyimide tape with a layer of silicone adhesive.

17. (original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the sheet carrier is a polyester tape with a layer of silicone adhesive.

18. (original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the metal coating comprises a layer of nickel covering the surface of the metal layer which is not covered by the

photoresist, and a layer of metal selected from the group consisted of gold and palladium covering the nickel layer.

19-20. (cancelled)

21. **(new)** The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein each of the connection pads has an upper surface and a side wall extending downwardly from said upper surface, and the metal coating is formed on said upper surface to cover not only said upper surface but also a portion of said side wall adjacent to said upper surface.

22. **(new)** The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the step of removing the sheet carrier is performed so that to expose a lower surface of said chip.

23. **(new)** The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the step of removing the sheet carrier is performed before the step of forming the protective metal flash.

24. **(new)** The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein each of the die pad and connection pads has an upper surface and a side wall extending downwardly from said upper surface, and the metal coating is formed on said upper surface to cover not only said upper surface but also a portion of said side wall adjacent to said upper surface.

25. **(new)** The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein
the step of removing the sheet carrier is performed before the step of forming the protective metal flash; and

the step of removing the sheet carrier is performed so that to expose the lower surface of said die pad and, subsequently, the protective metal flash is formed on said exposed lower surface of said die pad.